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National FIRE PLAN

ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

Oregon/Washington

an interagency report for fiscal year 2003

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF Natural Resources

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2003

Overview

Oregon & Washington
Fiscal Year 2003 National Fire Plan Accomplishments

As the third year of the National Fire Plan implementation closed, success was once again realized in all key areas. Building on the strong foundation of two previous years, firefighting resources were trained and ready for the season's suppression activities; fuels treatment goals were met; and collaboration and communication for even stronger partnerships reached new heights.

This summary documents interagency accomplishments in implementing the National Fire Plan in Oregon and Washington for Fiscal Year 2003 (FY 2003). This report is a supplement to the National FY 2003 Performance Report for the National Fire Plan. The National Fire Plan laid the foundation for a program of work to reduce wildfire risk and restore fire-adapted ecosystems across the Nation's forests and grasslands. In FY 2003, approximately $300 million was spent in Oregon and $124 million in Washington under the National Fire Plan.

Torching on the B&B Complex Fire burning in Central Oregon in July 2003.

In 2001, Congress approved funds for federal and state agencies and local communities to better plan and prepare for future wildfire seasons. The result of that planning and preparation is commonly known as the "National Fire Plan." The goals of National Fire Plan are to ensure sufficient firefighting resources for the future, to rehabilitate and restore fire-damaged ecosystems, to reduce fuels (combustible forest materials) in forests and rangelands at risk, especially near communities, and to work with local residents to reduce fire risk and to improve fire protection.

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Cooperation among Agencies

The National Fire Plan is a long-term commitment based on cooperation and communication among federal agencies, states, local governments, tribes and interested publics. This summary provides information on the collaborative accomplishments of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior (DOI) in Oregon and Washington in four major National Fire Plan areas: Hazardous Fuel Reduction, Community Assistance, Fire fighting, and Rehabilitation and Restoration.

In Oregon and Washington, interagency partners involved in National Fire Plan implementation include the:

Oregon Department of Forestry
Oregon Governor's Office
Washington Department of Natural Resources
Washington and Oregon State Fire Marshal Offices
County Commissioners
Tribal Governments
Department of Interior (DOI) Agencies
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- Fish & Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service

Environmental Protection Agency
and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service.

Firefighter managing a prescribed fire near Lakeview, Oregon.

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The Plan at Work

Community Education
Through workshops and fire prevention programs, communities are learning how to reduce their wildfire risk. Simple steps, such as clearing away brush, moving woodpiles, and replacing wood shingles with fire-resistant material, are making a difference.

Local Fire Department Assistance
Local fire departments are a vital part of fighting wildfire. Through the National Fire Plan, they are receiving increased training and equipment.

Reducing Hazardous Fuels
The National Fire Plan provides funding for restoring fire's natural role in ecosystems through prescribed fire, thinning, and other means of reducing hazardous fuels, thereby lessening the danger to people and communities. As prescribed fire use increases, scientists will assist managers in understanding how to minimize the impacts of smoke emissions on air quality.

Protecting Water Quality
Research scientists and land managers are working to ensure that erosion in burned areas has minimal impacts on watersheds, many of which provide drinking water to communities.

Better Protection & Preparedness
With the presence of additional firefighting resources, many communities are more prepared when faced with wildfire.

Ecosystem Re-establishment
The work doesn't end when the last flame is extinguished. Federal land managers, state foresters, scientists, and volunteers are helping to restore forests and rangelands after wildfire.

Economic Development
The National Fire Plan supports restoring the land, reducing fuels, and creating products from thinned materials, all of which can increase local employment opportunities.

What's Our Current Situation?

In Oregon and Washington, there are millions of acres at high risk of severe wildfire.

A significant portion of these is located within the wildland-urban interface, the area where human development intermingles with wildland, and poses one of the greatest challenges to land managers. The agencies intend to increase the number of fuels reduction treatments each year, particularly within the wildland-urban interface. The agencies believe it is less expensive in the long run to treat fuels than spend money only on fire suppression. Suppressing large wildfires can cost up to five times more per acre than treatments.

Wildfire on Public Lands

The picture of wildfire on public lands in the Pacific Northwest has changed over the last century as fuel conditions have changed. Fuel is the term land managers give to trees, brush, grasses, and dead vegetation on the ground. Over the past century, land use and land management practices such as fire suppression, drought, insect infestation, and disease have changed the natural role of fire in our ecosystems. Today, when a fire starts, flames are more likely to use the dense ground vegetation as a ladder to climb into treetops. This can result in larger, more severe wildfires that are difficult to manage.

This situation did not occur overnight, and it may take decades to correct.

Land managers know it will take time and persistence to improve the health of public lands. The agencies are using new ways developed through the National Fire Plan, Healthy Forest Initiative, and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act to aggressively tackle fire hazard reduction on public lands.

Community Involvement

Community Involvement is key to Reducing Wildfire Risk

Wildland-urban interface areas exist wherever homes and businesses are built among trees, brush, and other flammable vegetation. Wildland-urban interface communities exist throughout Oregon and Washington, in both rural locations and urban areas. Wildfires move from forest, brush, or grassland into communities or from communities into adjacent wildlands. Either way, community involvement is a key element in reducing fire hazards near communities and in restoring burned landscapes. Community assistance programs focus on building community capacity to develop and carry out citizen-driven solutions that will reduce the community vulnerability to risks associated with wildland fire.

Communities need assistance in many ways. Agencies delivered assistance by providing support for educating citizens, community wildfire protection planning, training and equipping firefighters, purchasing equipment, and revegetating landscapes around communities. In FY 2003, state foresters delivered a wide range of assistance through grant programs. Community assistance efforts emphasized working together at all levels of government and encouraging active participation from citizens and landowners.

There is a lot of work necessary to reduce hazardous fuels surrounding communities. It is important for communities to be involved, especially in developing local Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Community involvement is also important in successfully carrying out treatments. For instance, private landowners may provide access to areas where treatments occur. Or, they may assess and change the fuel conditions on their own property to complement those in treated areas.

Community Assistance

In the Pacific Northwest, federal and state agencies work together to build effective community protection programs. In total, $11.4 million of DOI and USDA Forest Service grants were awarded to states and communities through a variety of community assistance programs. Grant programs include the Wildland-Urban Interface Grants Program, State Fire Assistance, and Rural Fire Assistance.

Wildland-Urban Interface Grants Program

Wildland-urban interface grants were awarded to states and communities through an interagency grants process including DOI agencies and the USDA Forest Service. Forty-seven grants totaling $6.5 million were awarded for hazardous fuel reduction projects; community wildfire protection planning and monitoring; prevention and education programs; and for biomass utilization and marketing of hazardous fuel reduction by-products (see maps on pages 12 and 13). These grants leveraged $3.8 million in project activities, matching every dollar of federal funding with $0.58 of non-federal funding.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grants:

These grants are for fuels reduction projects on private lands including thinning of the forest understory, piling and burning brush, and reintroducing fire through controlled burning.

Community Wildfire Protection Planning and Monitoring Grants:

These grants are for developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans including community risk assessments, mitigation activities, and monitoring projects.

Prevention and Education Grants:

These grants are for wildfire prevention and education programs such as Firewise, signage, outreach, and media campaigns.

Biomass Utilization and Marketing Grants:

These grants are for developing markets and processing plants for the vegetative material removed from forests to reduce hazardous fuels.

State Fire Assistance

State Fire Assistance is a USDA Forest Service program to improve the fire protection capabilities of state forestry agencies and to assist communities in mitigating wildland-urban interface fire hazards. Nearly $3 million was awarded to the states of Oregon and Washington to assist 24 communities.

Volunteer Fire Assistance & Rural Fire Assistance:

The interagency Volunteer Fire Assistance and Rural Fire Assistance programs dispersed more than $1.9 million to 218 fire districts in Oregon and Washington to use for training, equipment purchases, and prevention activities.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

The four pictures above were taken from the same photo point on the Deschutes National Forest. A. A crowded and insect infested forest stand; B. The stand after thinning; C. After prescribed fire; D. After a wildfire, the B & B Complex Fire of 2003.

Reducing Fire Hazard & Restoring Forests

By designing projects that mimic the natural role of fire across the landscape, managers can reduce fire hazard while restoring ecosystems that evolved with fire.

Land managers are attempting to imitate the important ecological role that frequent, low-intensity fires once played in Oregon and Washington. This involves a sequence of steps including mechanical treatments such as thinning of the forest understory, piling and burning brush, reintroducing fire through controlled burning, also known as prescribed fire, herbicides, grazing, or a combination of these and other methods. Managers know healthy, actively managed forests and rangelands are more resilient to insect attacks and severe fires and have the capacity for renewal and recovery from a wide variety of disturbances.

Working with communities is critical to project success on federal lands near private lands. There are trade-offs such as smoke in the air and blackened landscapes, but these are temporary inconveniences to achieving healthy ecosystems.

Hazardous Fuels Treatments for Oregon & Washington

Fuels reduction and restoration treatments are designed to reduce the risk of unwanted wildfire to people, communities, and natural resources. Such treatments accomplish these goals by removing or modifying wildland fuels to reduce the potential for severe wildfire behavior, lessen post-fire damage, limit the spread and proliferation of invasive species and diseases, and maintain and restore healthy diverse ecosystems.

During FY 2003, DOI agencies and USDA Forest Service treated 249,228 acres of hazardous fuels on federal land and adjacent lands through planned treatments. Approximately 56 percent of the acres treated were within the wildland-urban interface, this represents a 14 percent increase over FY 2002. Managers used prescribed fire on 52 percent of the acreage treated, mechanical methods on another 45 percent, and a variety of other means on the remainder.

The program continues to emphasize reducing wildfire risk to communities through treating hazardous fuels within the wildland-urban interface. Referring to Chart 1 below, 138,330 wildland-urban interface acres received treatment, a 15 percent increase over FY 2002. The majority of the mechanical treatments, or 60 percent, occurred in the wildland-urban interface. Out of the 249,228 acres treated in FY 2003, 18 percent were non-wildland-urban interface acres receiving mechanical treatments. See maps on pages 12 and 13 for project locations.

Chart 1. Total FY 2003 Hazardous Fuels Treatments for OR & WA*

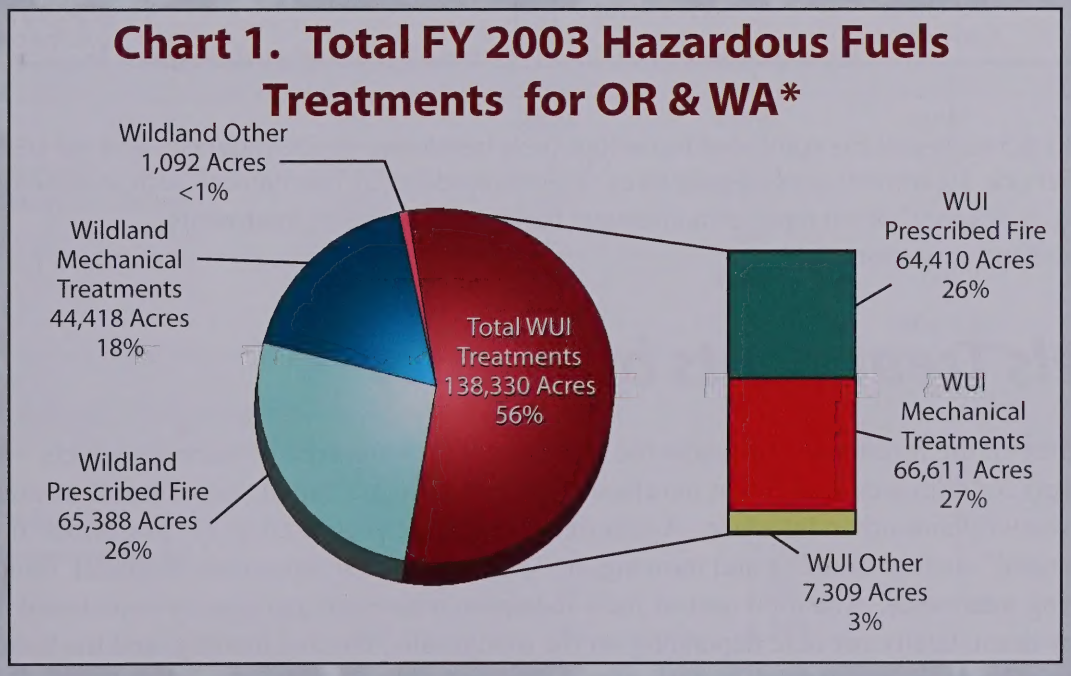


*Chart 1 represents the combined hazardous fuels treatments for DOI agencies and the USDA Forest Service. Treatments are categorized as 1) "prescribed fire", 2) "mechanical" such as thinning and mowing, or 3) "other" which represents chemical, biological, or grazing treatments.
WUI - wildland-urban interface.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Fuels Treatments by State

In FY 2003, DOI agencies and USDA Forest Service conducted hazardous fuel reduction treatments on 214,487 acres in Oregon and 34,741 acres in Washington. See maps on pages 12 and 13 for project locations.

Chart 2. Oregon FY 2003 Hazardous Fuels Treatments*

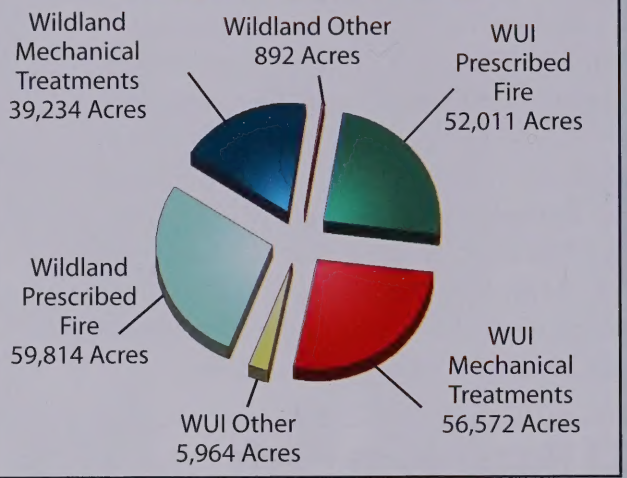
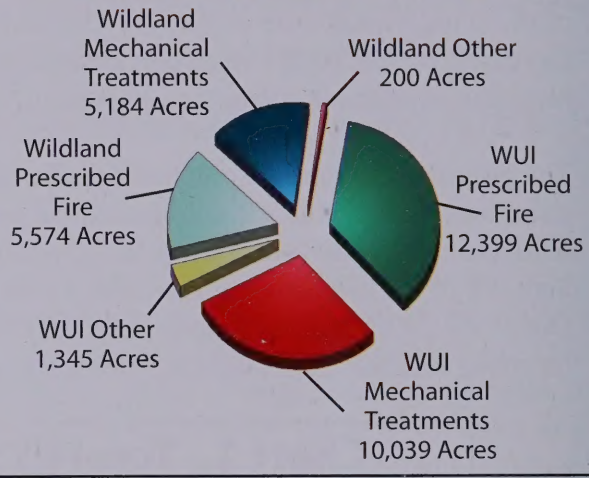

Wildland Mechanical Treatments 39,234 Acres
Wildland Other 892 Acres
WUI Prescribed Fire 52,011 Acres
Wildland Prescribed Fire 59,814 Acres
WUI Mechanical Treatments 56,572 Acres
WUI Other 5,964 Acres

Chart 3. Washington FY 2003 Hazardous Fuels Treatments*


Wildland Mechanical Treatments 5,184 Acres
Wildland Other 200 Acres
Wildland Prescribed Fire 5,574 Acres
WUI Prescribed Fire 12,399 Acres
WUI Other 1,345 Acres
WUI Mechanical Treatments 10,039 Acres

*Charts 2 & 3 represent the combined hazardous fuels treatments for DOI agencies and the USDA Forest Service. Treatments are categorized as 1) "prescribed fire", 2) "mechanical" such as thinning and mowing, or 3) "other" which represents chemical, biological, or grazing treatments.
WUI - wildland-urban interface.

Fuels Treatments by Agency

The tables on the following page show the number of acres and type of hazardous fuels treatments for both wildland-urban interface areas and what are called "other areas" or areas not within the wildland-urban interface. Again treatments are categorized as 1) "prescribed fire", 2) "mechanical" such as thinning and mowing, or 3) "other" which represents chemical, biological, or grazing treatments. The total cost of fuels reduction treatments per agency is included and can vary dramatically per acre depending on the topography, the fuel loading, and the treatment area's proximity to structures. The following have been abbreviated: FS: USDA Forest Service, BLM: Bureau of Land Management, FWS: Fish & Wildlife Service, NPS: National Park Service, BIA: Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Oregon

Hazardous Fuel Reduction in Wildland-Urban Interface Areas

Agency	FS	BLM	FWS	NPS	BIA
Prescribed Fire (Acres)	23,164	28,724	0	0	123
Mechanical Treatment (Acres)	19,835	31,959	3,420	0	1,358
Other (Acres)	0	5,670	0	0	294
Total Acres	**42,999**	**66,353**	**3,420**	0	**1,775**
Total Cost	No Data[1]	$19,375,000	$2,778,000	0	$1,775,000

Hazardous Fuel Treatments in Other Areas

Agency	FS	BLM	FWS	NPS	BIA
Prescribed Fire (Acres)	35,481	11,735	11,180	168	1,250
Mechanical Treatment (Acres)	21,621	14,781	255	215	2,362
Other (Acres)	0	892	0	0	0
Total Acres	**57,102**	**27,408**	**11,435**	**383**	**3,612**
Total Cost	No Data[1]	$9,593,000	$1,428,000	$261,000	$1,756,000

Washington

Hazardous Fuel Reduction in Wildland-Urban Interface Areas

Agency	FS	BLM	FWS	NPS	BIA
Prescribed Fire (Acres)	10,523	0	1,054	192	630
Mechanical Treatment (Acres)	5,567	300	1,770	578	1,824
Other (Acres)	0	0	1,345	0	0
Total Acres	**16,090**	**300**	**4,169**	**770**	**2,454**
Total Cost	No Data[1]	$560,000	$328,000	$804,000	$991,000

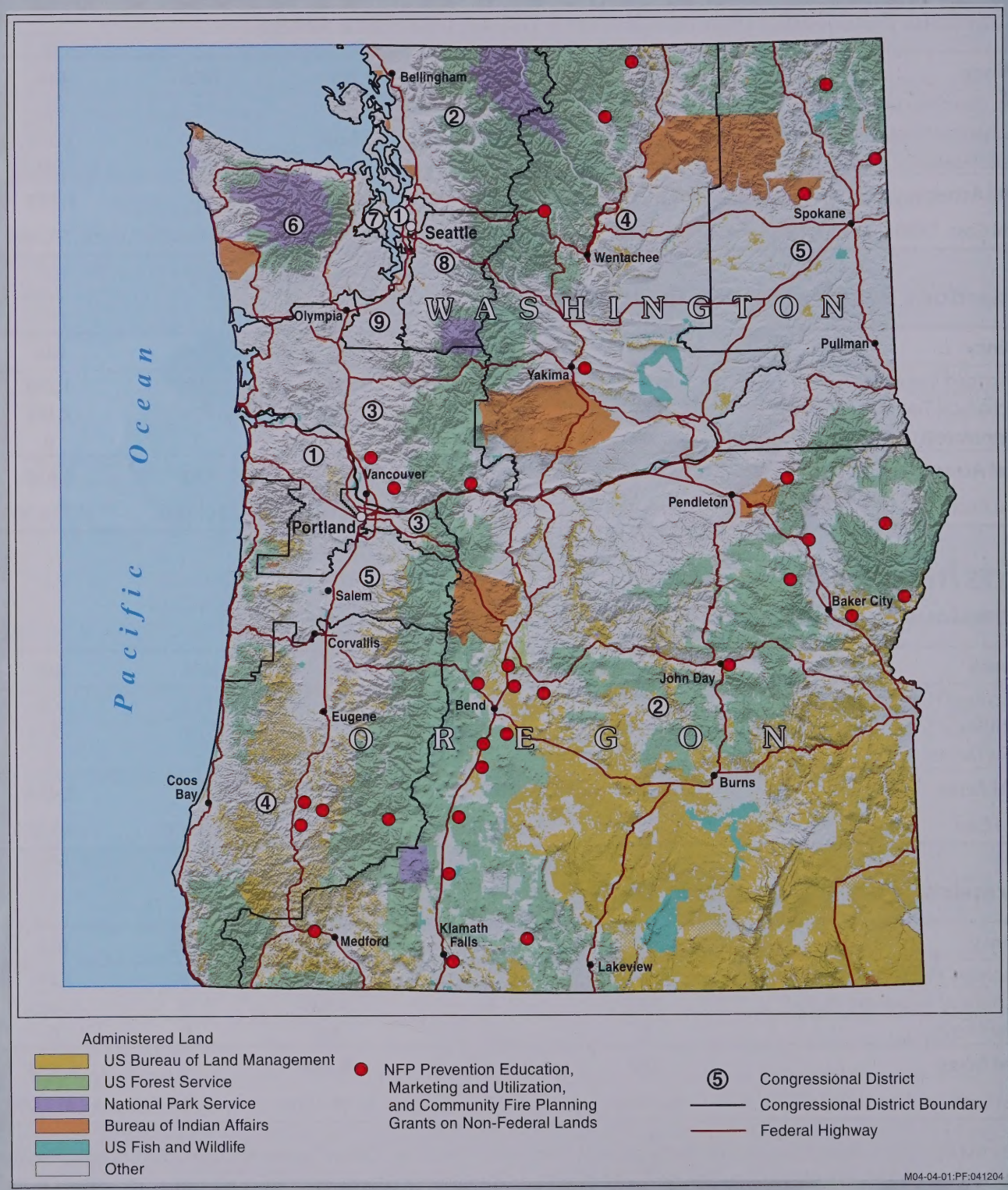
Hazardous Fuel Treatments in Other Areas

Agency	FS	BLM	FWS	NPS	BIA
Prescribed Fire (Acres)	34	0	2,542	0	2,998
Mechanical Treatment (Acres)	193	0	2,506	0	2,485
Other (Acres)	0	0	200	0	0
Total Acres	**227**	0	**5,248**	0	**5,483**
Total Cost	No Data[1]	0	$1,067,000	0	$2,412,000

[1] The cost for USDA Forest Service projects are not tracked by "WUI" or "Other"; however, the USDA Forest Service spent a total of $16,444,000 in Oregon and $3,632,000 in Washington on hazardous fuels reduction projects in FY 2003.

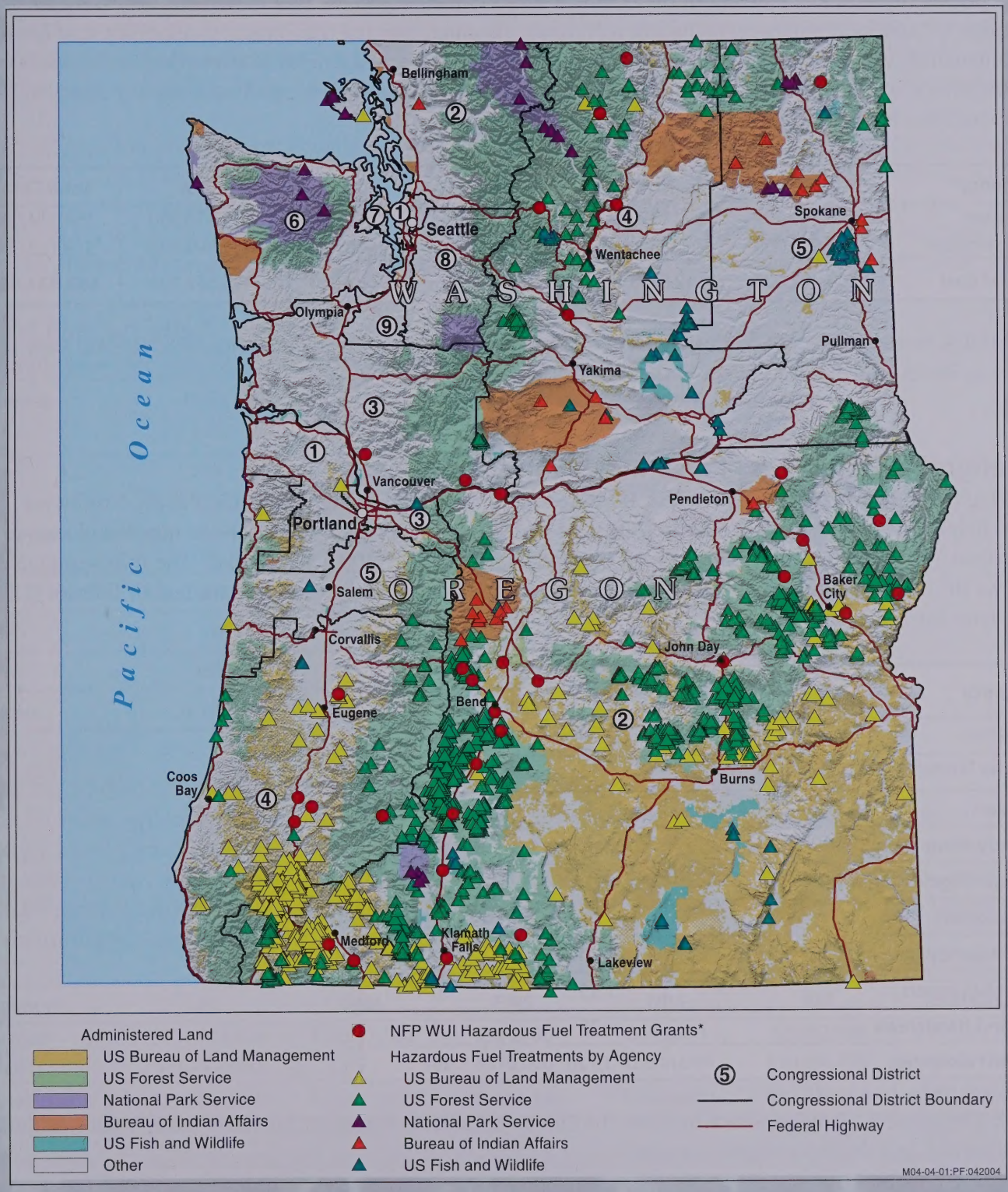
FY 2003 National Fire Plan Education and Planning Grants

This map shows the location of the 33 education and planning National Fire Plan Grants awarded for FY 2003 under the Wildland-Urban Interface Grants Program. These grants provide funding to states, counties, or local communities for activities such as developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans or for prevention education programs such as Firewise.



FY 2003 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Projects Implemented

This map shows the location of hazardous fuels reduction treatments by agency and the 34 Hazardous Fuels Reduction Grants awarded through the Wildland-Urban Interface National Fire Plan Grants Program. These grants provide funding to states, counties, or local communities for fuels reduction treatments on non-federal land.



*NFP - National Fire Plan, WUI - Wildland-Urban Interface

Firefighting Resources

Preparedness

Fire preparedness, a key element of the National Fire Plan, incorporates all components necessary to prepare for and fight wildfires, including workforce planning, training, equipment availability, and facilities maintenance. All of this enables federal wildland fire management agencies to strengthen and enhance initial attack and fire suppression efforts. The following table shows how much each agency spent on preparedness for FY 2003.

Agency*	FS	BLM	FWS	NPS	BIA	Total Costs
Oregon	$46,240,000	$12,817,000	$1,958,000	$219,000	$2,970,000	$64,204,000
Washington	$13,982,000	$0	$978,000	$468,000	$2,699,000	$18,127,000
Total Cost	$60,222,000	$12,817,000	$2,936,000	$687,000	$5,669,000	**$82,331,000**

*FS: USDA Forest Service, BLM: Bureau of Land Management, FWS: Fish & Wildlife Service, NPS: National Park Service, BIA: Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Firefighting Resources - Personnel & Equipment

During the 2003 fire season, there were 1,947 federally employed firefighters in the Pacific Northwest who helped to suppress over 4,000 fires, 98% of which were suppressed during initial attack and kept to less than 100 acres. Of the 4,000 fires, 63 became large fires over 100 acres in size. The following table shows the number of resources available from the USDA Forest Service and Department of Interior (DOI) agencies for FY 2003.

Agency	USDA Forest Service	DOI*
Engines	196	114
Water Tenders	13	6
Dozers	8	7
Heavy Airtankers	7	0
Single Engine Air Tankers	2	5
Helicopters	8	5
Interagency Hot Shot Crews	10	2
Smokejumpers	55	0
Type II Handcrews	23	6
Total Firefighters	1,726	597

*DOI- Department of Interior which includes the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and the Fish & Wildlife Service.

Fire Suppression

Fire and Aviation Management in Oregon & Washington

The Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group, an interagency group including the five federal wildland fire agencies, two state forestry agencies, and two state fire marshal associations was established to coordinate wildfire management in Oregon and Washington. In addition, the Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management division is managed cooperatively.

Fire and Aviation Management became the first staff in the nation to integrate USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management functions into a single co-located unit in 1995. By working cooperatively, the two agencies can administer fire, fuels and aviation programs, increase program efficiency, and capitalize on technical expertise. Their jurisdiction covers both Oregon and Washington and includes 10 Bureau of Land Management districts, 19 National Forests, and the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.

2003 Fire Activity*

Overall fire activity for the 2003 fire season is as follows:

Agency	Fires	Acres	% Fires	% Acres
BIA	188	5,262	5%	2%
BLM	275	17,084	7%	5%
FWS	39	1,293	<1%	<1%
NPS	78	5,287	2%	2%
FS	1,447	263,970	35%	84%
ODF	1,178	9,346	28%	3%
DNR	962	12,232	23%	4%
Totals	**4,167**	**314,474**	**100%**	**100%**

Fire Suppression Operations

Dollars spent on fire suppression operations include all costs associated with wildfire suppression on agency administered land, lands of cooperating federal agencies, or other lands for which an approved agreement exists. This includes rehabilitation required as a direct result of suppression activities, such as rehabilitating firelines, fuel breaks and damaged water courses. Also included are expenditures necessary to return suppression equipment, such as engines or radios, to a serviceable condition.

Agency*	FS	BLM	FWS	NPS	BIA	Total Costs
Oregon	$134,018,000	$17,837,000	$524,000	$606,000	$2,992,000	$155,977,000
Washington	$76,374,000	-	$670,000	$2,014,000	$10,946,000	$90,004,000
Total Cost	$210,392,000	$17,837,000	$1,194,000	$2,620,000	$13,938,000	**$245,981,000**

*BIA: Bureau of Indian Affairs, BLM: Bureau of Land Management, FWS: Fish & Wildlife Service, NPS: National Park Service, FS: USDA Forest Service, ODF: Oregon Department of Forestry, DNR: Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation

The Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Program provides funding for improvement activities after a wildfire. It is divided into two programs: Emergency Stabilization provides funding for up to one year after a fire for activities that stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation to natural or cultural resources and to minimize threats to life and property. Rehabilitation provides funding for efforts taken within three years after a wildfire. Rehabilitation activities include projects that repair or improve fire-damaged lands unlikely to recover on their own or for minor repair to facilities. The following tables show the amount of Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation funds spent in each state.

Oregon

Agency	# of Projects	Acres Treated	Cost
FS	1	500	$4,303,000
BIA	1	1,064	$458,000
BLM	46	705,851	$7,721,000
FWS	1	5	$4,000
OR Total	**49**	**707,420**	**$12,486,000**

Washington

Agency	# of Projects	Acres Treated	Cost
FS	0	0	$0
BIA	8	339	$2,976,000
BLM	2	304	$88,000
FWS	3	1,500	1,487,000
WA Total	**13**	**2,143**	**$4,551,000**

Dry Creek Drainage Defensible Space

The Dry Creek Drainage Defensible Space Project was designed to reduce the threat of wildfires in and around approximately 200 home sites near The Dalles, Oregon. This project is providing assistance to non-industrial landowners to create defensible space on approximately 1,600 acres in the wildland urban interface.

Before Treatment

After Treatment

The Oregon Department of Forestry utilizes National Fire Plan Grant funds as a cost share incentive to allow landowners to treat stands in order to meet the overall hazardous fuels reduction objectives. The Dry Creek Drainage is at extreme risk of wildfire due to the increase in rural residences in the wildland-urban interface and the significant role the Columbia River Gorge winds play in creating potential for severe wildfire behavior.

The Oregon Department of Forestry is working collaboratively with the USDA Forest Service in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue, the Mosier Rural Fire District, Fish & Wildlife Service, the Mid-Columbia Fire Prevention Coop, and local rural and county agencies.

An initial grant of $172,000 was awarded to Oregon Department of Forestry, which over $150,000 was committed directly to fuels reduction work on the ground. To date, 160 acres have been completed around 21 homes. Work is continuing on 53 homes in which 480 acres will be treated. An additional 327 homes are on a waiting list for funding in this area. The average cost per acre is $550.

For more information please contact: David J. Jacobs, (541) 296-4626, djacobs@state.or.us

NG A DIFFERENCE

Ashland Watershed Restoration & Fuels Reduction

The City of Ashland, Oregon, USDA Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, and private landowners are working to reduce the risk of severe wildfire to the community and the municipal watershed by creating defensible space and restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.

Ashland Fire and Rescue is cooperating with Oregon Department of Forestry to administer cost-share work with local landowners on 2600 acres in and around the Ashland city limits. The work protects the Ashland Creek Watershed, source of the City's drinking water and location of specially protected lands. This project links thinning completed on 600 acres of municipally owned land in the watershed and two hazardous fuels reduction projects on federal land.

The City of Ashland coordinates with the Ashland Parks Department, Oregon Department of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, private landowners, homeowner's associations, non-profits and local contractors. There is a high level of community involvement through a city Forest Lands Commission and the Ashland Watershed Stewardship Alliance.

Strategic placement of projects has created defensible space within the wildland-urban interface to help reduce the risk of future wildfires to the watershed and to private property. Over 170 acres inside the City limits have been treated across 147 private properties in three years. Work outside the city limits is ongoing. For 2004, private landowners have agreed to thin over 300 more acres within the wildland-urban interface. In addition, a fire planning map is updated each year which reflects the new fuels treatments on private lands. This map will be critical in assisting fire managers with future fire suppression operations.

Ashland Fire and Rescue received $262,500 of National Fire Plan grant funding which was matched with $105,833. Ashland Fire and Rescue received funding through Oregon Department of Forestry's community assistance program in 2001 and in 2003 on four grants totaling over $500,000.

For more information please contact Chris Chambers, (541) 552-2066, chamberc@ashland.or.us

Bobar Landscape Project

Since 1995, the Medford District BLM has pursued planning that met comprehensive landscape-level ecosystem restoration goals by integrating forest health, hazardous fuels reduction, and wildlife and aquatic habitat objectives into one project.

Before Treatment
One goal of the Bobar project is to restore the health of the oak woodland and shrubland plant communities of southwestern Oregon.

After Treatment
The Bobar project required coordination between the Oregon Department of Forestry and adjacent private landowners.

The Bobar Project, located within the wildland-urban interface in southwestern Oregon, is a good example a of landscape-level project. This project effectively reduced the threat of severe wildfires by working across federal and private property boundaries to treat fuels. Treating vegetation at the landscape scale is helping to restore native plant communities by thinning and reintroducing fire to a larger area at one time.

The Bobar Project involves treating 4,900 acres of federal land adjacent to private land and includes one of the first stewardship contracting projects. Treatments are implemented through a sequence of steps that include thinning of conifer forests, oak woodlands and shrublands, followed by the reintroduction of fire through prescribed burning. Work is ongoing in the Bobar project area; 400 acres are currently under contract to be completed by this summer.

Several factors are helping the Bureau of Land Management accomplish hazardous fuels reduction across ownership boundaries. The first is coordinating with adjacent private landowners and the Oregon Department of Forestry. Private land owners have granted access through their property to allow the Bureau of Land Management a more economical way to reach federal lands that results in more acres treated. Under a community assistance wildland-urban interface grant for $249,000, the Oregon Department of Forestry provided financial assistance and incentives to landowners to create survivable space around homes. Landowners were identified through the Applegate Fire Plan, a collaborative fire planning process completed with a 2001 National Fire Plan grant.

For more information please contact
Kristi Mastrofini, (541) 618-2384,
Kristi_Mastrofini@or.blm.gov.

SW Washington Fuels Reduction Grants: Phase I

The Washington Department of Natural Resources is using grant funding in a multi-phase hazardous fuels reduction campaign throughout southwestern Washington.

Over the last 10 years in southwest Washington the population has experienced rapid population growth and many new homes are being built in forested areas. In order to reduce the threat of wildfire to these areas, National Fire Plan grants and Western States Fire Assistant grants were pursued by the Washington Department of Natural Resources to fund risk assessment and defensible space projects around individual homes in Skamania, Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.

Under the first phase of the grants, 367 homes were assessed for wildfire risk, and based on those assessments, defensible space was created for 267 homes. Much was learned through this process and the knowledge gained will continue to benefit current and future work. Through community initiative and involvement, a long-term commitment to fuels reduction has begun. For more information please contact Bob Bannon (360) 902-1315, bob.bannon@wadnr.gov.

Firefighters chipping vegetation removed in the creation of defensible space.

Little Canyon Mountain Fuels Reduction Project

Little Canyon Mountain circa 1898-1904

Little Canyon Mountain 2002

In 2002, concerned citizens of Grant County, Oregon requested the Bureau of Land Management take action to address the immediate wildfire danger threatening their homes due to fuels buildup on adjacent public lands in the Little Canyon Mountain area in Eastern Oregon.

Little Canyon Mountain, located in eastern Oregon, is adjacent to the communities of Canyon City and John Day. The northern edge of the mountain is only one mile from town. Ten homes lie adjacent to Bureau of Land Management lands which are densely populated thus causing great wildfire risk.

In response to the citizen's concerns, the Prineville District Bureau of Land Management identified both short and long-term solutions to reducing wildfire threat to the community. To immediately address the hazard to private homes, the district prepared a categorical exclusion that thinned 70 acres adjacent to the homes in October 2002.

Long-term solutions included developing a plan to identify objectives to reduce hazardous fuels. This plan was completed in 2003 and addressed fire prevention and suppression opportunities, forest health objectives, road access, off-road vehicle use, and problem garbage dumping. As a result, the District completed a timber sale to remove dead and dying timber and has future plans for a stewardship contract.

Little Canyon Mountain Stewardship Contract

Plans for 2004 include offering the 10-year Little Canyon Mountain stewardship contract to meet restoration needs as well as to provide economic returns to the local community. This contract includes reducing hazardous fuels on 2,500 acres and incentives for innovative proposals to utilize biomass.

Local landowners are doing their part by working with the Oregon Department of Forestry to create defensible space on their private property. Defensible space projects are being accomplished through National Fire Plan grants. In addition, community groups played a significant role in clean up efforts on the mountain.

More detailed information on the Little Canyon Mountain Hazardous Fuel Reduction project can be found at http://www.or.blm.gov/prineville/LCM/home.htm.
Or contact Dan Tippy (541) 416-6729, Dan_Tippy@or.blm.gov

Cooperative Research in Prescribed Burning

Research burns were conducted by interagency fire crews during the week of June 23, 2003, at the Lava Beds National Monument near Klamath Falls, Oregon.

Prescribed burning at Lava Beds National Monument - 6/25/03

The Bureau of Land Management's Lakeview District's 20-person fuels management crew from Klamath Falls participated in burning 30 acres to determine the best time to burn in different sagebrush ecosystems throughout the Lava Beds National Monument. The 46,559 acre Lava Beds National Monument is located in northeastern California, about 58 miles southeast of Klamath Falls, Oregon and is managed by the National Park Service.

The research is being conducted to study the impacts of prescribed burning in spring, summer and fall conditions in sagebrush ecosystems. Specific burns will assess fire's impact on healthy sagebrush ecosystems, sagebrush areas that have been invaded by cheatgrass, and sagebrush areas that have been invaded by juniper trees. Results will help refine prescribed burning prescriptions in the monument and may be applied to similar ecosystems on Bureau of Land Management lands.

For more information please contact
Joe Foran (541) 885-4117,
Joe_Foran@or.blm.gov.

Burning big sage at Lava Beds National Monument - 6/25/03

BLM firefighter using water to control prescribed burn in Lava Beds National Monument, 6/25/03

Sun Mountain Ranch Wildland-Urban Interface Project

Residents of the Sun Mountain Ranch, a private subdivision in north-central Washington, are learning how to make their 750-acre development less prone to wildfire hazards thanks to funds from the National Fire Plan.

This is a post-treatment photograph taken in an area that has been thinned. Ladder fuels and brush have also been removed or piled. This photo was taken near a residence and is a good example of defensible space. A fire will not quickly move through here; nor will it climb into the crowns.

Over 100 homes in Winthrop, Washington will benefit from a hazardous fuels reduction project for a 40-mile wide area surrounding their subdivision. The strip is sandwiched between National Forest land and nearby Bureau of Land Management land and was overgrown with vegetation. Surrounding properties will also benefit from the reduced risk of wildfire to this area and have participated in a Firewise workshop held to build community support and understanding of the importance of reducing hazardous fuels.

The project consists of three components, to create a fuel break, to thin overstocked stands, and to prune bitterbrush and other shrubs along roads that present a fuels hazard. The projects completed thus far have used both mechanical and hand equipment for thinning.

The project identified vegetative conditions that need fuels treatment within the Sun Mountain Ranch area. The treatments are expected to reduce the risk of standreplacing crown fires by thinning trees and removing ladders fuels.

This project is a collaborative effort with the USDA Forest Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and local fire district. All key groups have actively participating in planning, designing, and implementing the project. The Bureau of Land Management assigned a wildlife specialist and an archaeologist to conduct wildlife and cultural resource surveys within the project area. Residents of the neighborhood were also participants in this project.

As of June 2004, a majority of the project area has been thinned, construction of a fuel break is completed, most of the slash has been chipped and burned, and a sizable portion of the underbrush pruning has been hand cut. Resource specialists with the Bureau of Land Management Spokane District will continue to monitor this project area.

For more information please contact Kathy Helm (509) 536-1252, Kathy_Helm@or.blm.gov

Yakama Nation Hazardous Fuels Treatment

The Yakama Nation Fuels Program has a multi-year (2001-2004) wildland-urban interface project funded by National Fire Plan to reduce hazardous fuels near communities.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Yakama Nation fuels program has been working to create fuel breaks around residences in the designated at risk community of White Swan, WA on the Yakama Indian Reservation. Working collaboratively with White Swan residents, the Bureau of Indian Affairs is constructing approximately 250 fuel breaks around individual and groups of homes. The fuel breaks have reduced property damage, acres burned, damage to natural resources and suppression costs as evident in the following story.

On Tuesday, August 12, 2003 at approximately 3:00 P.M. one of the fuel breaks was put to the test. A wildland fire had been reported in the White Swan area and was five acres in size. The fire burned until it reached the fuel break, which acted as a direct fireline, stopped the advancing wildfire and thus protected homes. The wildfire burned approximately 25 acres with minimal damage to the surrounding sage brush and bitterbrush habitat. Approximately $24,000 worth of property outside the fuel break was damaged.

For more information please contact Gene Lonning (503) 231-2175, Gene.Lonning@bia.gov.

Methow Valley Ranger District

The Methow Valley Ranger District worked collaboratively to reduce wildfire threat to communities and to restore fire-adapted ecosystems.

Firefighters igniting the PWI Rendezvous Prescribed Fire, May 2003

Firefighter igniting the Doe 3 Prescribed Fire, May 2003

The Methow Valley Ranger District fuels program of the Okanogan–Wenatchee National Forests worked to reduce wildfire threat in the wildland-urban interface. During the 2003 fire season, the Ranger District's work showed how successful hazardous fuels projects can be in changing fire behavior and when planning fire suppression strategies. Three projects are highlighted here.

Working collaboratively with the Pacific Watershed Institute (PWI) a local nonprofit, private citizens, Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the Ranger District completed two adjacent prescribed fire projects totaling 3,067 acres in the wildland-urban interface. The first was the 67 acre PWI Rendezvous Project on private land and the second was the 3,000 acre Cub Creek Project on National Forest land. In addition, another project, called Doe 3, involved the combined thinning and prescribed fire of 495 acres of National Forest land.

At the time the Ranger District got involved with the PWI, the group had already been working with private landowners on community fire planning and fuels reduction projects with Fish & Wildlife Service grant funding. The institute requested the Ranger District's technical assistance in implementing prescribed fire on private land. The Ranger District agreed to assist with the project knowing it would complement the adjacent Cub Creek Project then created a burn plan and conducted the prescribed burn. The two projects established or widened existing buffers of treated forest between private lands and federal lands.

As a result, hazardous fuels were reduced in high priority areas and the community was spared potential damages when threatened by the Fawn Peak Complex Fire of 2003. Both the Cub Creek and Doe 3 were utilized in fire suppression operations on the fire. The Cub Creek burn became contingency fireline and the Doe 3 Project was used as direct fireline providing a strong anchor point for successful burnout operations. The projects directly helped to stop the advancing wildfire.

For more information please contact Dee Townsend (509) 996-4015, dtownsend@fs.fed.us.

Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Fish & Wildlife Service fire managers from the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Corvallis, Oregon have burned approximately 455 acres to reduce hazardous fuels and to enhance critical habitat for threatened and endangered species.

Prescribed fire on the Basket Slough National Wildlife Refuge, one of the refuges in the complex.

The Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex, consisting of Ankeny, Basket Slough, and William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuges, is located in the Willamette Valley, approximately 70 miles south of Portland, Oregon. The Complex is home to the Fender's Blue Butterfly, the Willamette Daisy, and Kincaid's Lupine; all federally listed species. Hand and mechanical contract thinning was used to prepare treatment areas. These methods were followed with prescribed burning to maintain reduced fuels and to promote the growth of native plant species.

Projects are ongoing on all three of the refuges managed by the Complex and are a product of strong local collaboration by Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Forestry, and the Monroe Rural Fire Department. Because most prescribed fire operations are conducted within close proximity to the city of Corvallis, interagency cooperation is critical. These prescribed burns not only meet Refuge fuel and habitat objectives in a safe and professional manner, but also provide valuable interagency fire training.

Handford Reach National Monument, WA

Since its creation in 2000, the Handford Reach National Monument, managed by the Fish & Wildlife Service successfully conducted a prescribed burn on approximately 400 acres. The purpose of the treatment is to improve habitat quality by restoring the native shrub-steppe and sagebrush and to eradicate the invasive species tamarix (also known as salt cedar) by helping to prepare the area for herbicide treatment. The burn removed dead and standing tamarix that resulted from earlier aerial herbicide treatments. It also uncovered remaining live native trees in the understory.

Managing tamarix is a long term endeavor. Future treatments will occur once the now burned trees have begun to re-sprout. Vigorous new growth will increase absorption of the herbicide into the roots, resulting in more effective and permanent removal of the invasive species.

For more information on both stories please contact Bruce Babb (503) 231-6234, bruce_babb@fws.gov.

Chelan County Fire Prevention Project

Chelan County Public Works and Solid Waste office received two grants from the Fish & Wildlife Service to establish no-fee chipping sites for woody debris removed from private land for hazardous fuels reduction.

The horizontal grinder hard at work.

Three sites were created in the areas of Chelan, and one in the Leavenworth area. The end result, was the Leavenworth site collecting 845 cubic years of woody material and an estimated 755 cubic yards of woody material was collected in the Chelan area from private land owners.

The City of Chelan assisted in coordinating the collection sites and chipping work. Chelan County waived all fees for disposing of materials. The County coordinated with the Public Utility District to bring in a large horizontal grinder, funded by a National Fire Plan grant, and paid for operations and maintenance. The City of Chelan loaded the grinder at two of the sites, while a private contractor was hired for the third Chelan Site. The chips were used in various ways including the County's compost project, mulch for the City's public works roadways and for residential gardens and flower beds.

The sites were open to the public throughout the summer months. Residents were grateful for an opportunity to dispose of hazardous fuels removed from their property at no charge. By participating in the free chipping program, fuels from private property were completely removed rather than stockpiled for a future prescribed burn project. The success of the project has encouraged Chelan County Public Works to seek additional grant funding for fiscal year 2004.

For more information please contact Brenda Harn (509) 667-6415,
Brenda.S.Harn@co.chelan.wa.us

Coordinated Interagency Information Sharing

Funded by a National Fire Plan grant, the Rural Information Technology Center (RITC) of Northeast Washington is working to coordinate interagency information sharing to reduce the risk of wildland fire.

RITC is gathering and organizing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) fuel and fire data from different agencies for a tri-county area. The information will be for used in pre- and post-wildfire strategy planning especially for the wildland-urban interface. Federal, state, and private agencies have collaborated to make this project successful including rural fire districts, Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille county officials, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington State University Cooperative Extension for Stevens County, The Lands Council, FireSafe Spokane, Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The purpose of the project is to shorten emergency response times and enable local fire districts to respond to wildfire more quickly, lowering the risk to homeowners. Before this project, an integrated database showing potential hazards and accurate maps without regard to jurisdiction boundaries did not exist. The information includes emergency access, fuel loading, vegetation types and water sources as well as roads, bridges, buildings, and areas with endangered species. By managing information and making it consistent across all partners, rural communities now have the information necessary to design community treatment plans in high risk areas. For more information please contact Al Kowitz (509)684-2588, akowitz@ritc.org

At-Risk Youth Crews Reduce Hazardous Fuels

The Trout Creek Conservation & Fuels Reduction Project is a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional project that covers 160 acres in Sisters, Oregon.

Youth involved learn GPS, surveying, environmental concerns, and how to work collaboratively.

Funded with National Fire Plan grant money, this project will reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface, enhance habitat for the rare plant Peck's penstemon, and provide job training for local at-risk youth. The area, owned by the Sisters School District, is bordered by private and Forest Service property.

The project is locally coordinated by the school district, the Deschutes Basin Land Trust, and the Heart of Oregon Corps, a local non-profit youth training program. The project falls within the parameters of the Sisters/Camp Sherman Local Fire Plan and will produce a marketing strategy for biomass utilization. Thinning has begun on 40 acres with 40 more acres treated each year for the next four years. For more information please contact Barbara Niva (541) 617-6040, Barbara_Niva@co.deschutes.or.us

WSU Master Gardeners & Firewise

Washington State University (WSU) Master Gardeners have a specific charge from the University to address local and regional community issues. With National Fire Plan grant funding, the WSU Master Gardeners program, coordinated by WSU Pend Oreille County Extension Service, was expanded to include the important role of wildfire into the existing program curriculum, publications, and practices. As a result, sixty volunteers were trained to become Firewise landscape educators. The program has created a core group of active community members helping to spread Firewise landscaping concepts to many homeowners located in high risk areas.

After completing extensive training, WSU Master Gardeners conducted door-to-door outreach and plant clinics to homeowners. Using a checklist developed with the help of FireSafe Spokane and local fire district volunteers, landowners have learned to identify, prioritize, and implement hazardous fuels reductions projects.

Master Gardener volunteers developed articles for a quarterly newsletter, designed a demonstration site, and supported local prevention efforts. Each quarter, the Master Gardeners develop a newsletter mailed to over 1,500 households. Articles emphasize the compatibility of Firewise landscape principles with "water-wise" and "wildlife-wise" gardening. Master Gardeners have also embarked on designing a demonstration landscape that illustrates Firewise principles in collaboration with the Pend Oreille County Park and Recreation Board. For more information please contact Carol Mack (509)447-2401, cmack@wsu.edu.

Applegate Valley - Encouragement through Incentives

Before Treatment

After Treatment

Applegate Valley Rural Fire District #9 received a National Fire Plan grant to complete hazardous fuels reduction around homes and roads in the wildland-urban interface. Being directly tied to the Applegate Fire Plan, this is one of 65 projects identified as top priority. The project is currently underway and will thin fuels back to a minimum of 30 feet along both sides of 37.25 miles of roads identified, a minimum total area of 271 acres.

The Applegate's three rural Fire District Chiefs identified 33 roads or private driveways considered to be hazardous due to high traffic use and heavy fuel loading. The project offers private landowners the opportunity to participate in a rebate style program and builds incentives into the plan. As more contiguous neighbors participate, the amount of funding they receive for fuels treatments increases.

The Fire District is working closely with the Bureau of Land Management, the local watershed council, and private landowners to develop personalized prescriptions for each homeowner. An extensive public relations campaign was coordinated with the Applegate Fire Plan to inform private landowners and to plan the work to be completed. For more information please contact Brett Fillis (541) 899-1050, bfillis@applegatefd.com

Fuels Treatment Slows the 18 Fire

Fuzzy Nine Unit Prescribed Fire, November 2002

Fuzzy Nine Unit after the 18 Fire

This untreated area experienced high tree mortality after the 18 Fire. This area is located directly across the road from the Fuzzy Nine Unit, pictured above.

The 18 Fire was deterred from a southward advance due to fuels treatments that occurred the previous fall on the Fuzzy Nine Unit.

The human-caused fire started on July 23, 2003 on the Deschutes National Forest, two miles southwest of two subdivisions. The Deschutes County Sheriff's Department made contingency plans to evacuate the High Desert Museum and the two subdivisions in the event the fire spread. Northerly winds continually blew the 18 Fire through second-growth ponderosa pine and bitterbrush, often torching out stands of trees and spotting an eighth of a mile.

Fire managers had planned a containment strategy that would minimize resource damage by using existing roads, building bulldozer lines when necessary and utilizing completed fuels treatment work. One of the pretreated areas used in the suppression strategy was the Fuzzy Nine Unit. Land Managers had mechanically mowed bitterbrush on the 185-acre Fuzzy Nine Unit then conducted a prescribed burn to consume bitterbrush, reduce ladder fuels and rejuvenate under story plant species. The result was a second-growth stand of trees free of ladder fuels and a grass-covered forest floor clear of bitterbrush.

"If you look at the unit it's clear what effects the fuels treatment had on stopping the [18] fire's spread," said one firefighter who helped plan the Fuzzy Nine fuels treatment. "You can actually see where spot fires started in the unit then went out because of a lack of fuel." By changing the fire's behavior, firefighters could suppress the fire more effectively and safely and save the forest from extensive damage.

The 18 Fire continued to spread except where the Fuzzy Nine Unit butts against Forest Service Road 1810. Fire managers then used the road to contain the 18 Fire's east side. On July 26, firefighters contained the fire.

The suppression cost was $1.44 million, at $380 per acre. The cost for planning and implementing the Fuzzy Unit Nine prescribed burn was approximately $14,800, at $80 per acre. The Fuzzy Nine unit is one example of how fuels reduction treatments pay off on safer and less expensive suppression efforts. For more information please contact John Erwert (541) 383-4737, jerwert@fs.fed.us.

Fire Contracting in the Pacific Northwest

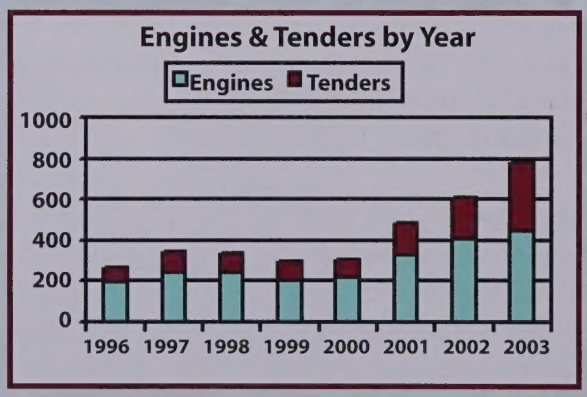
The Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group Contract Working Team (Contract Team) was established over a decade ago to provide a coordinated interagency approach to development and oversight of private vendor engines, tenders, and 20-person hand crews contracts.

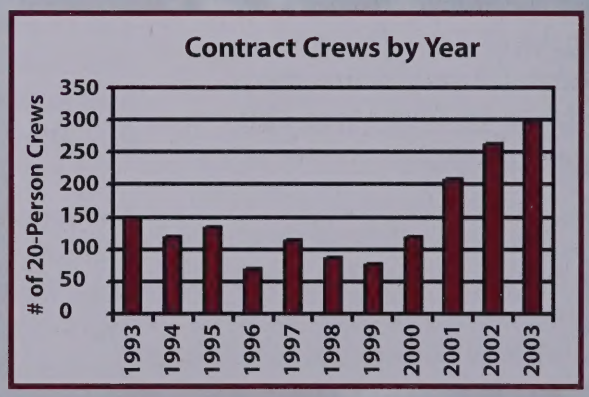
The Pacific Northwest Interagency Engine, Tender and Crew Agreement program is the only one of its kind in the nation. Due to reduced budgets, personnel ceilings, and declining agency resources, contract resources have increased over the years to fill the void in firefighting resources. In 2003, the program provided approximately 300 20-person hand crews, 440 engines, and 330 tenders to augment federal and state suppression resources. These numbers represent approximately 90 percent of all contract engines, tenders, and hand crew resources in the nation.

The Contract Team is comprised of representatives from the following agencies: USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Oregon Department of Forestry, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The interagency Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group supervises the Contract Team.

The purpose of the Contract Team is to develop contract standards, provide contract administration training, and to solicit and incorporate agency and public opinion into future agreement language. The Contract Team strives to foster working relationships between federal, state, and the private vendor and contracting community.

The contract program has witnessed significant growth in the last four years. This growth proves the importance of not only having access to such a resource militia for firefighting, but also the importance of having a governing group, like the Contract working team, to monitor for quality and compliance with agency regulations. The Contract Team works only with vendors that meet or exceed state and national training and equipment standards for wildfire suppression. The following graphs show the change in number of contracted resources by year.





Wallowa-Whitman Fuels Program

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (NF), located in northeastern Oregon and Western Idaho, completed over 20,000 acres of hazardous fuels reduction work in FY 2003.

National Fire Plan grant project on private land adjacent to the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Right: Before thinning; Left: After thinning.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has been implementing fuels reduction activities in areas conducive to uncharacteristically intense wildfires for nearly a decade. For FY 2003, thirty-four percent of the Wallowa-Whitman NF projects were in the wildland-urban interface, a direct result of their goal to prioritize projects in areas adjacent to private lands and communities at risk.

At the advent of the National Fire Plan in 2001 the Wallowa-Whitman NF found itself well situated to immediately begin implementing hazardous fuels projects. In the first year, they completed 12,000 acres of fuel reduction work, 45 percent was in the wildland-urban interface. Each year, they have either increased the number of acres treated or they have planned projects in anticipation of future funding. Viewed as a national model, the Wallowa-Whitman NF was selected to host the USDA Forest Service Chief's "Overview of the National Fire Plan" in October 2001.

The Wallowa-Whitman NF works with researchers to develop new science and technology. Their pioneering work with new contracting methods has been both regionally and nationally significant. The Wallowa-Whitman NF uses all the tools available to adjust to continually changing conditions and still get the work done.

The Wallowa-Whitman NF continues to actively collaborate and coordinate with the State of Oregon, the Bureau of Land Management, counties, municipalities, and key stakeholders to prioritize management activities. They coordinate with the Oregon Department of Forestry to identify communities at risk and to secure National Fire Plan funding. For more information please contact Matt Reidy (541) 523-1415, mreidy@fs.fed.us.

Steens Mountain Cooperative Fuels Reduction Project

The Bureau of Land Management initiated the East Ridge Ecosystem Restoration Project in 2000 in response to the unwanted increase of western juniper over the last 120 years in the Steens Mountain Range of southeastern Oregon.

Western juniper established in quaking aspen plant community has out-competed the aspen, notice the dead aspen on the ground.

In the first year after prescribed fire, the understory is full of native vegetation.

The overall objective of the East Ridge Ecosystem Restoration project was to reduce the negative influence of western juniper on native plants. The Bureau of Land Management Burns District has been using a combination of mechanical treatments and prescribed fire to remove western juniper and restore native plants such as mountain big sagebrush, quaking aspen, and riparian plant communities. The Bureau of Land Management collaborated with local landowners, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to apply treatments to the 3000 acre project since 30 percent was on private land.

Prescribed fire was applied in the fall of 2001 and again in 2003, producing a mosaic of burned and unburned areas. Initial results from the 2001 fire showed a 50 percent reduction in the western juniper cover and an increase in native plant cover thus meeting project objectives.

Western juniper encroaching on a mountain big sagebrush plant community on Steens Mountain.

Research and monitoring plots were established by the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center, made up of both the USDA and the Oregon State University Agricultural Experiment Station. Two private landowners secured matching funds from the research center to treat lands adjacent to the project area. The cooperation of adjacent landowners allowed burn units to be designed based on natural features, reducing the need to construct firelines and keeping the overall cost of the project down. For more information please contact Mike Morcom (541) 573-4343, Mike_Morcom@or.blm.gov.

Clark County Wildland-Urban Interface Project

Clark County Fire District 2 received a National Fire Plan grant through the Fish & Wildlife Service to conduct residential fire risk assessments, develop a wildfire community action plan, deliver Firewise programs, conduct hazardous fuels reduction on private property, and identify high risk areas to improve accessibility.

The District accomplished the work for the third straight year through its contract with Woodland Fire Department and in partnership with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the USDA Forest Service.

More than 200 homes were assessed and received a wildfire risk survey with recommendations for protecting their homes from wildfire. The end result was improved access, signage, mapping, and public relations in high risk areas. Properties with specific access problems have been identified and mapped and those that were difficult to locate due to poor address signage were provided with complimentary address signs installed by the fire department. Fire protection mapping was developed to identify high risk areas as well as water storage points and water "catches." Finally, by completing door-to-door assessments and several community Firewise workshops, the District strengthened community relations.

For more information please contact Rob Dahl (360) 225-7076, dahlr@ci.woodland.wa.us.

Leavenworth Fuels Reduction Project

Four Fish & Wildlife Service employees are being nationally recognition for their work with the community of Leavenworth, Washington, on a hazardous fuels reduction project conducted in FY 2003.

Four Fish & Wildlife employees will be presented with a national award for their participation in a fuels reduction project on the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery. The staff thinned 40 acres of overgrown forest on the hatchery grounds, chipping the small trees and brush. This treatment reduced wildfire risk to both the hatchery facilities and the nearby community of Leavenworth. Both have been threatened by two large wildfires in the past decade.

The project stimulated the formation of two neighborhood associations representing 300 families to reduce hazardous fuels around their homes. Fish & Wildlife staff helped the neighborhood associations prepare National Fire Plan grant applications. The grants funded the treatment of 3,000 acres of private land around Leavenworth. When a fire starts in the future, these acres will help protect the community.

For more information please contact Bruce Babb (503) 231-6234, bruce_babb@fws.gov.

Washington State Firewise Communities/USA 2003

Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners Association and Lummi Island Scenic Estates received Firewise Communities/USA Recognition in 2003 for their efforts to reduce wildfire risk to their communities. They became the first two recognized communities in Western Washington, bringing the total to three Firewise Communities/USA in Washington State.

New access road.

Fuel break around property.

Conducting a risk assessment.

After treatment around home.

Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners Association

Due to a high risk of wildfire to their community, the Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners Association asked the Washington Department of Natural Resources to complete a community risk assessment. After numerous site visits with property owners, the Washington Department of Natural Resources developed an assessment and a mitigation plan addressing key concerns. After the assessment, the association formed a Firewise Board, reviewed the community assessment, and began to implement the mitigation plan. The Washington Department of Natural Resources collaborated with interagency partners to help create an alternative entrance/exit for the community and a 100-foot wide fuel break on the property's perimeter.

Now during an emergency, the new access road will allow community members an additional way out and firefighting resources an additional way in. The 100-foot wide fuel break was created with the goal of modifying fuels such that firefighters would have a better chance of protecting the community in the event of a wildfire.

Lummi Island Scenic Estates

Accessible only by ferry or private boat, Lummi Island is remote and at high risk of wildfire. The island has a limited number of roads, 628 permanent residents and another 500 or so seasonal residents. A 1995 island wildfire demonstrated the logistical challenges inherent in attempting a quick initial attack when limited by ferry speed and carrying capacity.

As a result of Firewise education activities on the Island in 2003, Lummi Island Scenic Estates acknowledged their community fire risk and embarked on the journey to become a Firewise Community/USA. The community received a risk assessment, formed a Firewise board, created a mitigation plan and held numerous Firewise events and activities including creating several Firewise demonstration sites in conjunction with the Washington Department of Natural Resources.
For more information on both stories please contact Marc Titus (360) 856-3500, marc.titus@wadnr.gov.

Reducing Fuels in La Pine, Oregon

Federal officials, local fire agency managers and homeowners worked collaboratively on the Thaw Project to reduce wildfire danger on 863 acres adjacent to subdivisions near La Pine, Oregon using a new categorical exclusion authority established under the Healthy Forest Initiative.

The Thaw Project proposes to create a 500-foot buffer around homes on Bureau of Land Management land south of La Pine, Oregon near four subdivisions. The work includes mowing brush and thinning small-diameter trees to reduce fuels along escape routes used by homeowners in the event of a wildfire.

Walker Range Forest Protection, Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service and USDA Forest Service officials began planning the project in fall 2001, after local residents expressed concerns about wildfire risks posed by dense lodgepole pine stands. The Thaw project was identified jointly by the agencies and the community. The project uses a new authority created under the Healthy Forest Initiative to expedite the preparation and implementation of hazardous fuels reduction projects on federal land and to assist rural communities.

In reference to utilizing the new authority, Chis Mickle, team leader for the Thaw Project said, "This new tool may be used as a template for reducing the threat of wildland fires around other subdivision." He continues, "We still have to adhere to all environmental laws such as the clean air, clean water, and endangered species act. This really doesn't change the level of analysis except to allow needed projects to be implemented quicker."

For more information please contact Chris Mickle (541) 433-3216, cmickle@fs.fed.us.

Located near a subdivision, this pond was constructed with the help of the Walker Range Fire Patrol Association as part of the Thaw Project. The association has worked with USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management officials to reduce hazardous fuels and to build water sources that will help firefighters suppress wildfires.

Fire District Assistance Programs

The Rural Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance programs have provided 1.5 million dollars to Washington Fire Protection Districts and Fire Departments for new vehicle acquisitions, and a million dollars for personal protective equipment over the last three years.

By July 2004, approximately twenty-seven districts have acquired new or used truck chassis to be converted into wildfire engines or tenders. In most cases the chassis is used, but the fire package, tank, pump, and hose are brand new. Another 13 vehicles acquired through the Federal Excess Personal Property Program (FEPP) have been converted to engines and tenders. Another thirty new, used and FEPP chassis are under construction and will be operational by the 2005 fire season.

Examples of the direct benefits of these grants can be found in both Klickitat and Mason County. In Klickitat County Fire Protection District 13, the District was able to secure a lower insurance rating thanks to a Volunteer Fire Assistance grant to convert a FEPP chassis to a water tender. In Mason County Fire Protection District 18, a Volunteer Fire Assistance grant allowed for the construction of a special purpose watercraft for fire response and emergency transport. The watercraft has already provided initial attack on three fires along Lake Cushman. For more information please contact Bob Bannon (360) 902-1315, bob.bannon@wadnr.gov.

Boat converted to a special watercraft for fire response.

One of the water tenders upgraded with new equipment.

Fuels Reduction in Greenwater, Washington

Through National Fire Plan grant funding, the community of Greenwater, Washington is reducing fuels one home at a time.

Approximately 45 miles southeast of Seattle, near the entrance to Mount Rainier National Park and the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, is the community of Greenwater. The Washington Department of Natural Resources and the USDA Forest Service have identified the area as high to extreme wildfire risk as a result of these combined factors: "Chinook" winds which bring hot, dry air from eastern Washington to the valley; high vehicle traffic volume due to recreation use; and the rapid growth in residential development in heavily forested areas. Also contributing to the high level of risk is the local volunteer fire department's inability to provide adequate initial protection if faced with a wildfire. Additional firefighting resources are 45 to 60 minutes away.

In order to reduce wildfire threat, the community of Greenwater has worked closely with the Washington Department of Natural Resources to educate property owners and assist them with vegetation removal to create defensible space around homes. Under a National Fire Plan grant, fuels reduction work was conducted on 118 homes and an additional 28 homeowners voluntarily removed brush and flammable vegetation from around their homes. The Crystal River Ranch Homeowners Association in Greenwater purchased a commercial chipper to continue with fuels removal within their jurisdiction. This was a capital investment for this organization and a commitment to continue planning for fire safety in the subdivision they represent. For more information please contact Janice Pacific (360) 802-7060, janice.pacific@wadnr.gov

NW Washington Local Coordinating Group

In 2003, the NW Washington Local Coordinating Group was formed with individuals from 18 state, federal and county agencies.

The group's main objective is to create a regional wildfire risk assessment and opportunities for coordinating fire prevention activities among agencies in NW Washington. This effort was spearheaded by the Washington Department of Natural Resources and Skagit County Fire Warden.

The group is responsible for insuring inter-agency cooperation and coordination for all National Fire Plan activities, as well as regional wildfire prevention projects. The agencies' commitment to the group has enabled the region to provide the public with timely and consistent fire prevention and education messages. Participating agencies include: Whatcom, Skagit, Island, Snohomish & San Juan County Fire Marshal's offices, Orcas Island Fire, San Juan County Fire, Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDA Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife, National Park Service, Whatcom, Skagit, Island, Snohomish & San Juan County Conservation Districts, WSU Extension, Washington State Parks, and Washington Department of Natural Resources. For more information please contact Marc Titus (360) 856-3500, marc.titus@wadnr.gov.

The Community of Union Valley Takes Action

The community of Union Valley, Washington worked collaboratively with the Washington Department of Natural Resources to coordinate hazardous fuels reduction projects.

Removing ladder fuels in the wildland-urban interface.

Fuel break after thinning treatment.

The community of Union Valley is approximately 10 miles north of the recreational area of Lake Chelan in eastern Washington. The community has been in the direct path of three large fires in the last five years. With narrow winding roads, one way in and out, steep topography and heavy fuel loading, the community is at risk of wildfire.

In order to reduce wildfire risk, the community has worked with the Washington Department of Natural Resources on a variety of very successful initiatives. The community started by attending Firewise workshops to learn the basics of defensible space and fuels manipulation. By coordinating their efforts with other agencies, the community purchased a chipper and created defensible space around 50 homes in the area.

By applying for and receiving grants through the USDA Forest Service and the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Union Valley completed a risk assessment and created 77 acres of shaded fuel breaks along roads and ridges. These fuel breaks complement fuels reduction projects for both the USDA Forest Service and the Department of Natural Resources. Phase two of the grant project will start in May of 2004 and will involve an additional 115 acres of shaded fuel breaks, 120 acres of thinning, and the creation of defensible space for an additional 80 homes. Union Valley has become a showcase community for reducing hazardous fuels.

For more information please contact Debbie Robinson (509) 925-0966, deborah.robinson@wadnr.gov.

National Fire Plan Contacts in Oregon and Washington

If you would like more information about community groups, FIREWISE programs, or reducing fire risk please contact your nearest land management agency.

Interagency Fire Plan Coordinator
Bonnie Wood, bjwood@fs.fed.us, (503) 808-2701

Bureau of Land Management
Chris Strebig, chris_strebig@or.blm.gov, (503) 808-6003

USDA Forest Service
Rex Holloway, rholloway@fs.fed.us, (503) 808-2241

Fish & Wildlife Service
Bruce Babb, bruce_babb@fws.gov, (503) 231-6234

National Park Service
Bob Appling, bob_appling@nps.gov, (360) 696-7540

Bureau of Indian Affairs
Cory Winnie, corywinnie@pop.net, (503) 231-6759

Oregon Department of Forestry
Ann Walker, awalker@odf.state.or.us, (503) 945-7346

Washington Department of Natural Resources
Mark Gray, mark.gray@wadnr.gov, (360) 902-1754

National Fire Plan Related Websites
www.fireplan.gov
www.nifc.gov
www.nwfireplan.gov
www.firewise.org

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

National FIRE PLAN

ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

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